

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MONROV 06959 191749Z

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ACTION SS-30

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P R 191714Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 484

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T MONROVIA 6959

EXDIS

PARIS FOR SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LI, IS, ET, SU

SUBJECT: PROPOSED INITIATIVE OF ETHIOPIA/SUDAN/LIBERIA WITH
VATICAN ON STATUS OF JERUSALEM

REF: STATE 240821

1. AT 1430 DECEMBER 19 FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED IF I COULD COME
TO EXECUTIVE MANSION AT 1500 FOR A PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH PRESIDENT
TOLBERT. PRESIDENT TOLBERT (FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS PRESENT)
SAID THAT IN SPIRIT OF HIS DESIRE THAT USG BE INFORMED OF
SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING OUR TWO COUNTRIES, HE WISHED
TO INFORM ME OF A JOINT DEMARCHE YESTERDAY BY THE ETHIOPIAN
AMBASSADOR AND SUDANESE REPRESENTATIVE CONCERNING AN INITIATIVE
DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE TO A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE
EAST. HE SAID THAT EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE AND PRESIDENT NUMAYRI
DESIRED TO UNDERTAKE A JOINT MISSION TO THE VATICAN TO DISCUSS
WITH THE POPE THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF JERUSALEM
AND A FUTURE REGIME FOR THE CITY. AS A LEADING CHRISTIAN LEADER
OF AN AFRICAN STATE, HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO JOIN WITH THEM IN THE
MISSION WHICH THEY HOPE COULD TAKE PLACE BEDORE CHRISTMAS.

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PAGE 02 MONROV 06959 191749Z

PRESIDENT TOLBERT HAD RESPONDED THAT DUE TO AN EXTREMELY HEAVY

SCHEDULE HE COULD NOT JOIN WITH THEM ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE; HOWEVER, IF THEY WISHED TO PROCEED IMMEDIATELY WITH THE MISSION HE WOULD MAKE FOREIGN MINISTER AVAILABLE AS HIS REPRESENTATIVE. ON OTHER HAND, IF DATES LATER ON IN THE YEAR WERE ACCEPTABLE, HE WOULD RECONSIDER HIS PERSONAL PARTICIPATION.

2. I INQUIRED AS TO WHAT RELATIONSHIP THE PROPOSED MISSION WOULD HAVE TO THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE TO CONVENE IN GENEVA ON DECEMBER 21. TOLBERT REPLIED THAT HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO REPEAT NO IDEA OF WHAT STRATEGY EMPEROR SELASSIE AND PRESIDENT NUMAYRI HAD IN MINE WITH REGARD TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OR HOW THEIR PROPOSED MISSION RELATED TO IT. I OBSERVED ON A PERSONAL BASIS THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT A QUESTION OF STATUS OF JERUSALEM MIGHT BE AMONG LAST ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE CONFERENCE. CERTAINLY THE FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA WOULD BE THAT OF DISENGAGEMENT AND REALIGNMENT OF TROOPS FOLLOWED BY OTHER QUESTIONS, SUCH AS ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, EVENTUAL BORDERS, ETC., ETC. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER AT THIS STAGE TO ALLOW THE PARTICIPANTS DIRECTLY CONCERNED AT THE CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY AND PRIVATELY THESE AND ALLIED QUESTIONS. I INQUIRED WHETHER ANY INDICATION OF ALTERNATE DATES OF THE PROPOSED MISSION TO THE VATICAN HAD BEEN DISCUSSED, TO WHICH TOLBERT REPLIED HE WAS STILL AWAITING FURTHER SUGGESTIONS.

3. PRESIDENT TOLBERT THEN WENT ON TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP CONCERN OVER THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND HIS HOPE THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. HE UNDERLINED THE NECESSITY FOR THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO APPROACH THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GOOD FAITH AND WITH A DESIRE FOR PEACE. IF THESE FACTORS WERE PRESENT PROSPECTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED. HE REGRETTED THAT SYRIA HAD ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION NOT REPEAT NOT TO PARTICIPATE.

4. UPON DEPARTURE FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS ASKED THAT I HOLD THIS SUBJECT VERY CLOSE SINCE PRESIDENT TOLBERT WAS NOT INFORMING OTHER COUNTRIES. DENNIS PROMISED TO KEEP ME INFORMED OF SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.
MANFULL

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